



ANNUAL REPORT
OF
DELAWARE COMMISSION
FOR THE BLIND

305 W. EIGHTH STREET
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

FOR
FISCAL YEAR
JULY 1, 1960 TO JUNE 30, 1961

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FOREWORD

The written and pictorial information in the pages following is sufficient testimony to the fact that our work of rehabilitating Delaware's blind moves forward. This is the more heartening and the more remarkable in the face of mounting costs and reduced income. The State Legislature shortened our account somewhat on the grounds of paucity of State revenue: the Federal Office of Vocational Rehabilitation cut us down on the ground that Delaware is a "rich" State. Something illogical somewhere!

But the general public did not cut down either in their interest in our people and their doings or in the amount they contribute to the welfare of Delaware's blind.

This year two new personalities have enriched our Commission: Mrs. Caleb M. Wright and Dr. Robert B. Flint, both of New Castle County. Mrs. Wright was formerly Commissioner from Sussex County and it is good to have her rejoin us from her new address.

Noteworthy among our achievements this year are:

A fine new vending stand in the Wilmington Trust Company building at 10th & Shipley Sts. in Wilmington, and another, less ambitious but yielding promise, in the new Board of Health Building in Dover;

The launching of a young man, totally blind, into the piano tuning profession, where he will quite obviously be completely self-sustaining;

The broadening and deepening of coverage of need in our financial aid program through the pas-

sage of S. B. 37 conforming to similar legislation on the Federal level. In this area, grateful commendation is due and hereby tendered to both the State Legislature and the Congress.

It is noteworthy that more of our blind people are availing themselves of the services of dog guides. In two cases, the effective conduct of these fine animals is to a large part responsible for providing the boost of courage that enabled two of our finest workers to reinstate themselves in employment; the one as a machine operator in one of the du Pont plants; the other as a worker with the Cromer Heating and Equipment Company, Wilmington.

And so, another good year for Delaware's blind, made possible through the superb cooperation of employers, legislators, contributors, volunteer readers and chauffeurs, and many other effectively kindly folk. Particular mention must rightly be made of Governors Boggs and Carvel, President Pro Tem Reilly, our legislative godfather, and our many other good friends in the Legislature.

DELAWARE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

MEMBERS	RESIDENCE
Mrs. Irene duPont, <i>Honorary Chairman</i> ..	Granogue
Mrs. Jessie C. Wilson, <i>Chairman</i>	Dover
J. Francis Blaine, <i>Secretary</i>	Wilmington
Harold W. Horsey, <i>Treasurer</i>	Dover
Mrs. James E. Marvil	Laurel
Mrs. Caleb M. Wright	Montchanin
Robert B. Flint, Ph.D.	Greenville
Francis J. Cummings, Ph.D., <i>Exec. Sec'y</i>	Brandywine Hd.

OPHTHALMOLOGICAL CONSULTANT

Norman L. Cutler, M.D.

MEDICAL CONSULTANT

Martin B. Pennington, M.D.

COMMISSIONS MEETINGS

Regular Commission meetings are held monthly with the exception of the summer months of June, July, August and September. Special meetings are held as required. The annual meeting, during which officers are elected, is held in October. Meetings are held at the Commission headquarters unless otherwise specified.

PRINCIPAL OFFICE

305 W. 8th Street, Wilmington 1, Delaware
F. J. Cummings, Ph.D., *Executive Secretary*

DEFINITION OF BLINDNESS

“Blind person” means one who is totally blind or has visual acuity of not more than 20/200 in the better eye with best correction, or whose vision is limited in field so that the widest diameter subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

MANDATORY REPORTING

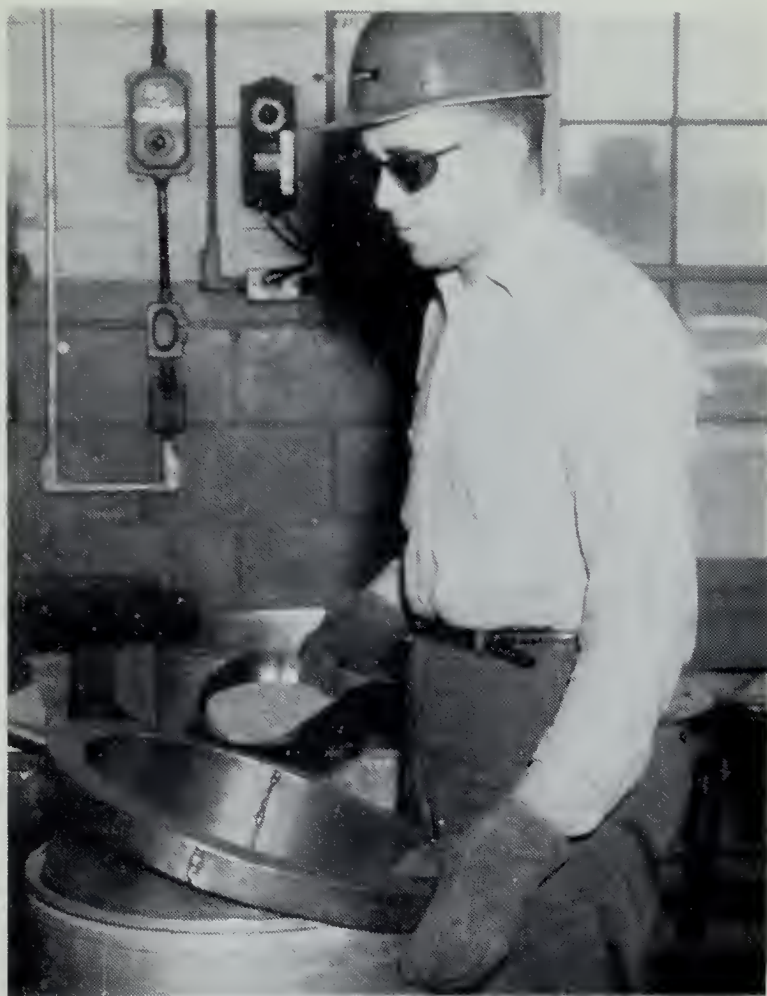
The laws of the State of Delaware (Title 31, Section 2109) require that every health and social agency, attending or consulting physician, or nurse, shall report to the Commission for the Blind, in writing, the name, age and residence of persons who are blind within the definition of blindness as indicated above, and in such cases shall furnish additional information as the Commission requests for registration or prevention of blindness.

In the interests of the blind people of our State, the Commission respectfully but strongly urges that Title 31, Section 2109 be strictly adhered to.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Under Federal and State Government financing, the Rehabilitation Division of the Delaware Commission for the Blind processed 55 applicants for Vocational Rehabilitation services in the past fiscal year. Of these it was determined that 37 would be significantly benefited through the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services. Many of these cases are still in the rehabilitation process; some in training, some awaiting jobs and others under the care of physicians in the physical restoration aspect of their rehabilitation. 17 clients successfully completed their rehabilitation program and are now independent and self sufficient persons.

The main stays of our Vocational Rehabilitation program are diagnosis, counseling, physical restoration, training and placement. More specifically, these services include: Medical, psychological and vocational diagnosis to determine the extent of the applicant's disability and his mental and vocational limitations; counseling and guidance to help the disabled person settle upon the right job objective; physical restoration to correct or reduce the disability; work therapy to help in the process of adjustment to blindness; prosthetic appliances, such



DANIEL SHERWOOD

Suddenly stricken with blindness in July, 1959, this 44 year old man with a family to support was at a loss to know where to turn. Less than one year later he was holding an essential job at the Dupont Krebs Plant in Newport, operating a pelletizer machine. Thanks to vocational counseling, training in the use of a guide dog and selective placement, PLUS valuable backing from his wife, children and the Dupont Company, this man can feel proud of his independence and of the fact that he is again the bread winner in his family.

as, glasses, magnifiers, hearing aids and other devices to increase work ability; training in schools, colleges, on-the-job, by tutors or correspondence, in preparation for the right job; transportation and maintenance during treatment or training, if needed; tools and equipment adapted for use by the blind to give them a fair start; placement in a suitable job, and follow up to insure continued employment.

TABLE I SERVICES PROVIDED

Diagnosis	7
Training	9
Occupational Tools	1
Eye Surgery	3
Other Surgery	2
Glasses	6
Dentures	1

TABLE II CASES REHABILITATED

Competitive Employment	5
Vending Stand	3
Self Employed	2
Sheltered Shop	4
Housewife	3

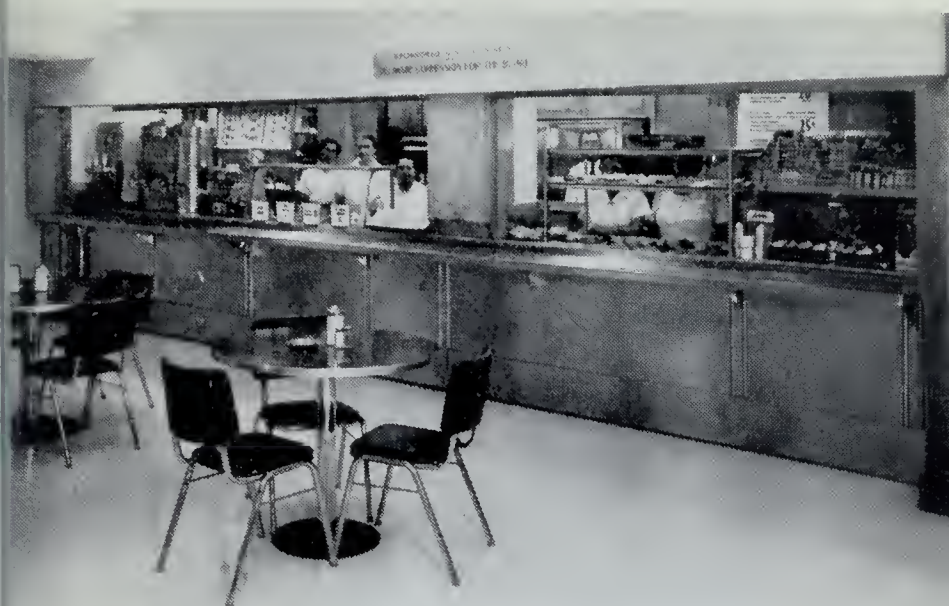
THE BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PROGRAM

The Delaware Commission for the Blind in co-operation with the office of Vocational Rehabilitation has been designated by the Federal Government as the licensing agency for the Business Enterprises Program conducted throughout the state.

The major purpose of the Business Enterprises Program is to provide continuous, substantial employment opportunities under which capable blind



Along with the usual counter service at the Wilmington Trust Company stand, a cart service on certain floors throughout the building has proven very popular, and furnishes substantial employment for two operators. This venture was one of the first of its kind in this area.



One of our newest stands at the Wilmington Trust Company, 10th & Shipley Sts., Wilmington.

men and women are trained to operate vending stands, snack bars and cafeterias in public and private buildings, factories and other suitable locations. Each stand is designed to meet the needs of its particular situation.

This is a non-profit program, the net proceeds of which accrue to the operators and assistants in the form of weekly salary, quarterly bonus and periodic distributions.

In operating the program, management is ever mindful of the newest improvements in equipment and design. The installation of such a unit eliminates considerable cost in building and operation to those for whom this service is provided. A competent supervisory staff is at hand at all times to assure the most efficient service.

During the past year, the Business Enterprises Program operated twenty full-time units and one part-time unit throughout the state, giving employment to eighteen visually handicapped operators. In addition, training in this field was afforded to four visually handicapped persons.

Also, during the past year it was our privilege to establish two new enterprises, one in the new Wilmington Trust Company Building and one in the new State Board of Health Building in Dover.

Gross Income	\$473,723.58
Total earnings to operators salaries, bonuses, etc.	70,410.60

WORKSHOP

In addition to the manufacture of rubberized fabric link mats (see illustration), we continued to make hit and miss rag rugs and ironing board covers and pads, which are sold locally and also supplied to other agencies for resale. This past year we started the manufacture of kitchen mitts, aprons and toaster and mixer covers which are now being sold locally.

Chair seat work has increased and now employs three men. Fiber rush work was started this past year, and now furnishes steady work for one man. Sub-contract work declined slightly during the past few months. However, our total production for sub-contract work was \$13,033.23 for the year.

We continue to strive for full employment of all capable blind people who desire it. The earnings of the workshop employees during the past year were \$33,734.82, an increase of \$7,411.60 over the preceding year. A total of 42 blind people were given employment during the year, for the most part on a part-time basis.



Here workers are engaged in a collating and stapling job for the Hercules Powder Co., Wilmington



The major employment of the Commission Workshop during the past year has been the continued manufacture of rubberized fabric link mats for the General Services Administration, and consigned to Army, Navy and Air Force installations—some for shipment overseas. Shown here are Thomas Bullock and Willie Bruten assembling a mat.

AID TO THE BLIND

The Delaware Commission for the Blind continues to administer that form of Public Assistance known as Aid to the Blind authorized by the Social Security Act (Title X) and Delaware Law (Chapter 23, Title 31). The Federal Government matches state funds for this program on a variable formula under the supervision of the Regional Office of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; whose function is to approve the State Plan which qualifies the State for Federal participation, and to review the actual administration of the Plan. This Plan assures every legally blind resident of the State the right to apply for an Aid to the Blind grant and to receive one if he is in need according to Agency standards as set out in the Plan. The Agency's policy has always been to make these standards as liberal as possible. This policy was greatly helped by the 1961 amendments to the Social Security Act increasing the amount of exempt earned income allowed an aid to the blind client from \$50 a month

to \$85 a month plus one-half of all over \$85. The Commission promptly instigated State Legislation in conformity with the Social Security Act amendment so that the new law became effective on June 15, 1961. The purpose of this liberalization is to stimulate legally blind persons to seek employment and become independent as soon as possible.

On June 30, 1961 there were 766 legally blind persons in Delaware known to the Agency, 264 of whom were receiving financial aid to the needy blind. The average grant was \$70.79 or \$.71 less than the average grant in June of 1960; and \$2.57 less than the national average of \$73.36. The decrease is due mainly to the increase in Social Security benefits. It is notable that of 766 legally blind persons only 264 are receiving public assistance, i.e., financial aid to the needy blind, less than 32%. The average number of new referrals per month during the year was slightly over 10, running from a high of 16 in October to a low of 5 in April. Many applicants are self-referred in response to public education; many come to us from other agencies, and far too few from the medical profession which is required by law to report all cases of blindness. Since the effectiveness of rehabilitation is in direct proportion to the speed with which rehabilitation services reach the newly blind, it is regrettable that referral is often postponed until the client is in financial need.

Of the referrals, not all are legally blind and not all the legally blind are applicants for an aid to the blind grant. Although the Commission is most often identified with the aid program, this is actually only a small part of the services offered to the blind.

SOCIAL SERVICE

Agency services are free to all legally blind people in Delaware. An intensely interested, devoted and trained staff is always available to render any service a client needs and desires. Individual and family counseling in the problems of living with a visual handicap is probably the most important aspect of the agency program as well as the most difficult to define. It is easy to understand what lessons in travel techniques, in reading and writing Braille and learning to use special appliances are; but the day in-day out support and encouragement each client receives is hard to put into words.

Amongst the tangible agency services, the one giving the most pleasure to the largest number of

clients is the Talking Book machine. These machines are furnished free of charge by the Library of Congress and loaned to the clients under agency supervision. Records are distributed without charge by the Library for the Blind in Philadelphia and include such subjects as biography, travel, essays, history, nature, politics, science, sports and novels; so that an individual has an excellent choice. The agency distributes Talking Book records of Readers Digest, News of the Week in Review, Newsweek, The Upper Room and Books of the Bible. Over 150 Talking Book machines are in use in Delaware.

Braille books are on loan from the agency and the Philadelphia Library, but with each passing year fewer people use these as the Talking Book services improve.

The agency continues to distribute and repair radios furnished by the American Foundation for the Blind to be loaned to clients. These are greatly appreciated by the users as they can keep them in their rooms and listen to the programs of their choice. In many homes, there would be no radio if this service were discontinued.

The agency continues to be blessed with a faithful group of volunteers who read, drive and guide clients and staff members. The many hours these wonderful people donate each year represent something that money could not buy.

PREVENTION AND CONSERVATION OF VISION

Although the agency does not have a separate department for prevention of blindness and conservation of vision, every staff member is a worker in these fields. Much time is used to insure that clients go to their eye doctors or clinics for regular check-ups, and that they use medication when prescribed. Sometimes, it is a temptation to "give up" on a particular client who has to be constantly reminded, encouraged and almost forced to take care of his eyes, but this is never done.

Eye examinations, surgery, visual aids and prostheses are furnished to persons who cannot provide them for themselves. Appointments with doctors and clinics are made upon request, and transportation arranged when necessary. The agency cooperates with the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness in observing "Sight-Saving Month" in

September of each year by intensifying the regular public education program. The press, radio, and television are used to acquaint the public of the importance of proper eye care, and to encourage people to contact the agency for help with visual problems. The exceptionally fine cooperation of the medical profession, clinics, health and welfare agencies (public and private), and the service clubs, contributes largely to the over-all success of the work.

DISABILITY DETERMINATIONS

The agency is under agreement with the Social Security Administration to make determinations of disability on all applications for Disability Benefits where "blindness" is claimed as the disability. As anticipated, the volume of cases more than tripled in the last fiscal year due to the lifting of the 50 year age requirement and liberalizing of the amount of coverage needed. In the year ending June, 1961, 20 cases were processed. In the first months—July through January of this year—19 cases were handled, only one less than the preceding twelve month period; while from February through June an additional 59 cases came in. The total for the year was 78 cases. From being one of the smallest programs in the agency, Disability Determinations expanded to a very sizable one. Many of the disability applications were on persons already known to the agency, but the Determinations Program is still a means of case finding, and therefore valuable.

EDUCATION

In our role as supervisor of the education of Delaware's blind children, we are happy to report on another year of continued growth and development.

Fifteen (15) children were enrolled in the braille classes conducted by the Wilmington Public Schools at the Lore School. In September, 1961, some of this group will be attending the new Shortlidge School.

Twenty-two (22) children from all parts of the State attended the Maryland School for the Blind, Overlea, Baltimore, Maryland. One Delaware lad, among the June, 1961 graduates, is already launched on a very promising career in the field of piano tuning here in his home State.

One (1) young lady, living in northern Wilmington, attended the Overbrook School for the Blind, Philadelphia.



The teen-age twins pictured are members of a swimming class conducted by Miss Mildred Bryan, Wilmington. For the past several years many blind children in the Wilmington area have been attending both swimming and dancing classes conducted by Miss Bryan. In addition to providing much enjoyment, these instructions aid immeasurably in the healthy, alert, socially competent development of our future citizens. The Commission is deeply grateful to Miss Bryan and her associates.

Twenty (20) legally blind children registered with the Agency were attending regular public and private school classes in all parts of the State. Staff personnel were available at all times for help in any problems which were encountered by the various members of the teaching staffs.

In addition to the children attending school, nine (9) children of pre-school age were visited by a Commission staff member, and counseling and guidance given to parents in coping with the particular problems of this age group.

The Commission continued its collaboration with the staffs of the Hospital for the Mentally Retarded and the Governor Bacon Health Center in furnishing suitable instruction to the blind children residing in these institutions.

Again this past year, arrangements were completed with the Delaware Society for Crippled Chil-

dren and Adults whereby twenty-three (23) blind children were sent at Commission expense to Camp Fairlee, Chestertown, Maryland, as part of their program of learning and development.

At the end of the past school year, the Commission made arrangements to give initial cane travel instruction to a selected group of children. Both parents and children were most enthusiastic and results encourage us to continue with this instruction.

Also, during the past year our rehabilitation counselor began working with the children in the 14 year old age group and their instructors in making future vocational plans.

Our gratitude once again to the sister agencies both public and private, and to the individual groups who have cooperated so generously in helping us meet the needs of our blind children.

HOME TEACHING

Throughout the year approximately 125 adult blind in all parts of the state were assisted by our home teaching staff in coping with the problems of blindness. These clients, who for the most part, became blind in their adult years, were given instruc-



HELEN BROWN

Mrs. Helen Brown operates a cutting machine at the Del. Mushroom Cooperative Assoc. in Wilm. Totally blind since birth, this woman never worked in industry before 1960. Counseling and selective placement under the rehabilitation program for the blind have helped her to become an independent tax paying member of the community.

tion in such important activities of daily living as dialing the telephone, telling time by touch, threading a needle, handling money, etc. As needed, helpful advice was given in the matter of personal grooming, orientation and travel; and to those who could benefit therefrom, lessons were furnished in reading and writing of braille, typing, pencil writing and handicrafts.

Also served by our home teaching staff were the adult blind in the various state institutions, who were visited regularly and given such instruction as could be helpful to them.

RECREATION

Again this past year the blind bowlers of the Wilmington area showed their intense interest in bowling by having two teams entered in the Interstate Blind Bowlers League, one team sponsored by the Commission and the other by the Wilmington Lions Club. The Commission sponsored team won the League championship for the second year in a row, and was awarded a very attractive trophy which is displayed proudly by the team in the Board Room of the Commission.

Such interest has been indicated by the blind in bowling as a competitive sport that next season a new recreational endeavor in this state will be tried with the formation of the Wilmington Blind Bowler's League. This four team league is the result of the efforts of many blind persons who have hoped for a number of years to establish a local bowling league. Area Lions Clubs have been contacted and much of the financial sponsorship for the league will come from Lions groups. This project will provide an excellent recreational outlet for many of Delaware's adult blind, and a vote of gratitude goes to the Lions Clubs for their enthusiastic sponsorship. The President of the League is Mr. Edward Stokes, a totally blind worker at the General Motors Boxwood Road plant.

A decided interest in the theatre has been shown by blind Delawareans during this past year with increased attendance at shows given by the Robin Hood Theatre players. A group of 22 persons attended a recent performance of "The Andersonville Trial"; 20 persons turned out for "The Cave Dwellers"; 20 more on a miserably rainy night for the performance of "The Pleasure of His Company"; and another 19 for Tennessee Williams' "The Glass

Menagerie". All who attended enjoyed the very talented performances immensely; some indicated that it was their only chance to get out for an evening's entertainment. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the management of the Robin Hood Theatre for the special arrangements made by them for our groups; and to the actors, actresses and other members of the staff who helped make these outings the very happy occasions they were to many of the blind of Delaware.

The annual fishing trip was held this past year with such increased interest shown that a second boat had to be chartered to accommodate the large response. The group of 22 persons went out from Bowers Beach and had a very happy time landing trout, flounder, sea bass, and an assorted variety of other fish. The party brought home over 130 fish not counting the big ones that got away and the small ones that were thrown back.

Another item of great interest to the blind of Delaware is the "ole ball game". This year another trip was made to Connie Mack Stadium in Philadelphia by 15 persons to watch the Phillies and the Cincinnati Reds play an exciting game until the seventh inning, when the roof caved in on the Phillies. But the blind fans had a good time anyway. Again, our thanks go to the management and players of the Phillies.

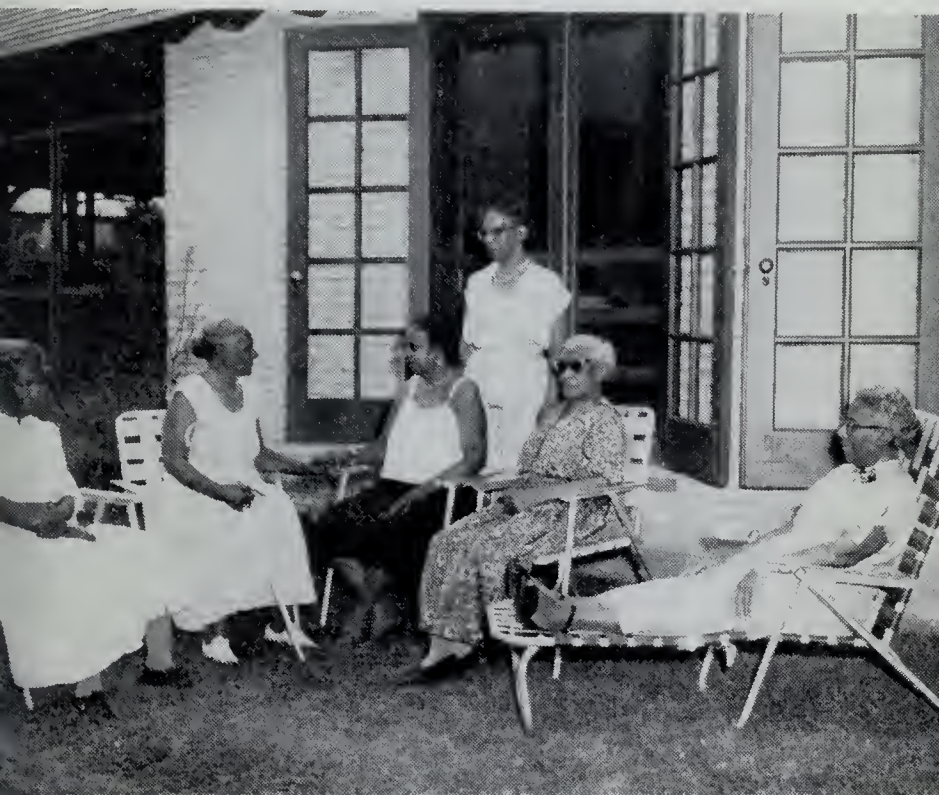
Last Christmas season, as in many years previous, our annual Party for the blind was held at the Wilmington YMCA, 11th & Washington Sts. A record 247 guests and guides were on hand to spend with us a very pleasant evening. Entertainment was provided by many of our talented blind folks and our good friends of the Delaware State Police. Refreshments were served, gifts distributed, and a good time was had by all.

LANDIS LODGE

This past year 52 blind guests from all parts of the State were entertained at Landis Lodge, our summer vacation center for the adult blind. Picnics and planned recreation were arranged, and guests were entertained several days each week with music, games and refreshments provided by interested friends and civic minded groups, notably the Wilmington Lions Club, Nur Temple String Band, the Ladies Auxiliary of the Millcreek Fire Company, the Ladies Auxiliary of the GAR, and the New

Orleans Crusaders. The ladies of the local Garden Clubs visited each group giving information on flowers and herbs, and in order to encourage active participation, assigned to each group a special project such as making sachets, arranging flowers, etc. Other activities enjoyed by the vacationers were group singing, pitching horseshoes, playing checkers and cards.

As in previous years, the Wilmington Council of Churches arranged for religious services at the Lodge on each Sunday during the vacation season.



These ladies are among the many blind Delawareans who spent an enjoyable two weeks at Landis Lodge during the past summer. Many guests from all parts of the state meet here year after year, and for them it is a time of happy reunion and reminiscing.

STATE USE BILL

Under provisions of Title 31, Section 2115 of the Delaware Code, State Agencies are required to purchase goods and services from the Commission for the Blind, when such goods and services are equal in quality and price with those available through other channels. An excellent working relationship has been continued by the Commission with most State Agencies.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Commission serves as Delaware's clearing house for all matters pertaining to work for the blind. Blind people, their families or groups interested in the welfare of the blind may secure through the Commission information about the work for the blind anywhere. Also, the Commission acts as middleman in the securing for blind Delawareans of free radios, braille-transcription service, railroad and bus travel concessions, movie passes, special appliances for the blind including braille watches, braille cooking timers, etc., white canes and other devices calculated to reduce for the blind person the difficulty of living independently. A display of special appliances for the blind may be seen at the Commission headquarters.

REGISTRATION OF SOLICITORS

Under provisions of Title 31, Section 2116 of the Delaware Code, the Commission is given the responsibility of licensing agencies or individuals outside Delaware who wish to solicit funds in Delaware for the welfare of blind people. The following agencies have been given permits:

American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.

15 W. 16th St., New York 11, N. Y.

American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc.

22 W. 17th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

Christian Record Benevolent Association, Inc.

3705 S. 485th St., Lincoln 6, Nebraska

Guiding Eyes for the Blind, Inc.

11 West 42nd St., New York 36, N. Y.

FISCAL REPORT

July 1, 1960 to June 30, 1961

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

	EXPENDITURES		
	TOTAL	STATE	FEDERAL
Administration	\$ 7,919.32	\$ 282.49	\$ 7,636.83
Vocational Guidance	21,314.84	939.13	20,375.71
Case Service including Vending Stands and other facilities	36,727.65	29,221.19	7,506.46
Training Grant	143.38	14.34	129.04
TOTAL	\$ 66,105.19	\$ 30,457.15	\$ 35,648.04

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Financial Aid to the Needy Blind including Vendor Payments	\$213,682.05	\$ 87,190.05	\$126,492.00
Administration	32,105.19	16,052.59	16,052.60
TOTAL	\$245,787.24	\$103,242.64	\$142,544.60

OASI DISABILITY FREEZE PROGRAM

	\$ 999.01	-0-	\$ 999.01
State Funds for other programs not matched by Fed. Funds	104,784.65	104,784.65	\$ -0-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$417,676.09	\$238,484.44	\$179,191.65

